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THE HISTORY
OF THE
IRISH REPUBLIC,

BY
MURDOCH HENDERSON.

AN EXTRACT.

FOR SALE BY ALL BOOKSELLERS.

W. DRYSDALE & Co., PUBLISHERS, BOOKSELLERS AND STATIONERS,
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PROPHECY FULFILLED.

MANY of those who, fifty years ago, opposed the cry for Home Rule, were often to be found declaring that what was then known as the national movement in Ireland, if allowed to run its course, would eventually develop into an agitation for independence or complete separation. For a time, the more moderate followers of Isaac Butt, took the greatest pains to conceal the true tendency of what seemed to some to be a reasonable demand for a better form of local government. But in 1885, when the Nationalists thought they held in their hands the balance of power between the two great parliamentary parties, and were suspected of having even formed an alliance with the Tories, Parnell had the courage to throw aside all disguise and to declare that nothing short of independence would satisfy the people of Ireland. Then it was there passed from mouth to mouth a prophecy, which pointed to a time when Irish independence, after having been constitutionally recognized by Britain, would degenerate into a state of anarchy before it was many months old; and it is the purpose of these pages, which have been selected from the detailed history of the short-lived Irish Republic, to show how that prophecy was fulfilled.

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to mark with increasing interest how the foresight of British statesmen had been verified by events after a lapse of fifty years or more. The whole account of the condition of affairs seems but a repetition of the history of the times before and after the memorable year of 1844, when Ireland saw nearly half of her population removed by starvation and emigration.

The opening months of the new year were pregnant with troubles of an alarming character for the young Republic. As has been already stated with some fulness, the dissolution of the union between the two countries had been followed by immediate results but little expected by those who had always maintained that Ireland was incapable of self-government. For several months after that momentous event, affairs in the island really did assume a re-assuring aspect. The re-action of passion, whether of excessive anger or joy, in itself is peace; and the expectancy arising from the organization of the new nation, involving to such an extent, as it did, the re-adjustment of property claims and the satisfying of personal ambitions, great and small, induced a spirit of pacification among the discontented and unruly classes; while the leaders of the great movement, who had developed the Home Rule principle into independence as an accomplished fact, having either obtained lucrative positions in the young commonwealth, or having the prospect of being appointed to such, were more eager than ever to proclaim their faith in the stability of an Irish *imperium*.*

Nor was it until Britain had been driven, by the influence of events of her own making, to recognise the independence of Ireland, that there took place any change of feeling towards England on the part of the Irish,—any attempt, feeble as it was, to conceal the hatred which had so wantonly found a climax in what is known as the Dynamite Campaign. In 1889, the Imperial Government, harassed by international troubles and the encroachments of a democratic movement, thought it expedient to make another experiment towards allaying the perennial discontent of the Irish people, and in carrying out their policy of pacification, succeeded in passing through Parliament a series of measures which gave to Scotland and Ireland a system of local government with local parliaments at Edinburgh and Dublin. Scotland, whose local affairs had often been sadly neglected on account of the pressure of legislation under the Imperial system, showed her gratitude by a quiet determination to give the new plan a fair trial; but the grievance-seeking patriots of Ireland continued as restless as ever. The semi-secret societies, which had been a source of disturbance for years under the insidious and ill-fated Parnell, continued as active as in the days of the Land League. Not even for a

Home Rule in
Ireland and
Scotland.

* "Nearly everybody now seems to have a desire for peace, though there is very little peace in the clamour for office. In the excitement, the old proverb has again come true—Every one for himself and the devil take the hindmost."—*Peter Cunningham's Journal*.

Excitement
under Home
Rule.

Ireland's
hatred towards
England.

season had they suspended their functions ; and, as has been recorded, the land rung as before with the tidings of agrarian outrages, and the skulking movements of the dynamite fiends. Home Rule, when granted, had produced as rich a crop of violent patriots, as in the days when it was hooted by Englishmen as an absurdity, and the laws for the protection of life and property seemed to be as little respected as in the days previous to the enactment of the Act of Peremptory Punishment. Many sensible people had always declared that Home Rule was only a stepping-stone to worse things, and by worse things they meant, of course, independence pure and simple. But these people, sensible as they no doubt were, knew little of the political exigencies of party strife, or the spirit of expediency which provokes legislation to please the majority for the moment, irrespective of subsequent effects. The administration that gave Home Rule to Ireland, did what was possibly the only thing for them to do, to save themselves in presence of a general election. To do them justice, they perhaps even thought they were acting as true statesmen ought to act, just as Gladstone felt that he was doing his duty towards God and man when he succeeded in disestablishing the Irish Church. Yet some of them must have suspected how foolish it was to think of promoting permanent contentment among a people who had seldom been able to distinguish between liberty and license, and in whom a spirit of unthinking antagonism had been cultivated for centuries. Hatred towards England was a principle on which too many Irish patriots depended for a livelihood, for it to disappear in presence of what could so easily be construed into a half-measure. A parliament in Dublin might be a good thing in its way, but such a parliament would only be allowed to exist by the Imperial authorities, as long as it respected life and property ; and the so-called Irish patriots felt that their mission was not to be at an end until civilization had granted to each individual Irishman the constitutional right to deal with landlordism as he saw fit. Indeed, if not in the very nature of things, at least in view of the indefinite demands made by the advocates of the change, it was the greatest folly to think of Home Rule as an ultimate solution of the Irish question. In the earlier times of Butt and Parnell, these varied demands had betrayed an inconsistency almost ludicrous, and even those of them that had a reasonable look had been conscientiously resisted by men, who readily saw how far they pointed to a restoration of affairs such as existed previous to the legislative union of 1840. If Home Rule was to be a mere experiment, these were accustomed to say, it was an experiment that had already been tried. Whatever it might mean as defined by interested agitators, it could not mean more in a legislative sense than the so-called independence of the island when Henry Grattan joyfully exclaimed,—“Ireland is now a nation,”—at a time when the only constitutional connection between the two countries lay in the person and prerogative of a common sovereign. If Protestant ascendancy did subse-

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as, has been recorded, Brian outrages, and the Home Rule, when granted, as in the days when it was the laws for the protection of the days preceding Punishment. Many Home Rules were only a stepping-stone, of course, independent of any doubt were, or the spirit of expediency for the moment, a concession that gave Home Rule for them to do, to do. To do them justice, the statesmen ought to be just towards God and the Church. Yet some thought of promoting and seldom been able to do in whom a spirit of intolerance for centuries. Hatred of many Irish patriots was the presence of what could be done in the Parliament in Dublin. The Parliament would only do as long as it respected the rights of the people. It felt that their mission was to grant to each individual with landlordism as a basis, at least in view of the change, it was the immediate solution of the problem. Parnell, these varied interests, and even those who were tentatively resisted by the restoration of affairs in 1840. If Home Rule were to say, it was an error it might mean as much more in a legislative sense when Henry Grattan was the time when the only way in the person and the ascendancy did subse-

faith in themselves or in the righteousness of their demands. Their hatred towards England had been more or less of mythical growth, and, like many other myths, had been diligently nurtured by the knaves who are ever ready to make an easy living out of the credulity of the ignorant. Rebellion and its subsequent suppression have wofully marked the periods of Ireland's history; yet, ludicrously enough, the suppression of treason has nearly always been represented by her would-be patriots as the bitterest of persecutions, and in many instances, as the cause of the rebellion. Nor have the Irish people ever been slow to accept the fallacy. An eccentric writer of a past period,* who often defied the assassin with the boldness of his statements, made no difficulty in tracing the grievances of the Irish people to the looseness of their logic. Patriots, priests, and poverty, he declares in one of his alliterative moods, are to be found individually or collectively at the bottom of every Irish grievance,—the patriots for pay, the priests for power, and poverty the issue of their success. The logical method of the ignorant has its origin in the wish that is father to the thought, and an Irish grievance has, in most instances, been the wish developed a stage further than the thought into a statement in which there lies no foundation of fact. In other words, the credulity of the Irish people has been exceptional. Any kind of grievance has been a sweet morsel to their hatred. They have never been able to serve the best of two masters, simply because they have never been able to discriminate between tyranny and liberty. They have courage enough, but it has been the courage of the man who runs a muck. They have cried out against the grip of constitutional authority, merely because an unconstitutional power has held them in the more painful grip that has forced them to raise the cry. For, as an actual fact, the tyranny of some of their most popular leaders has been more pronounced than that of any ruler who ever held the Castle influence in his hands. The great O'Connell and the greater Parnell suffered no Irishman, whom they could crush, to interfere with their plans and policy,—a statement well authenticated by the indignities which the former continued to heap upon the Young Ireland Party while it strove to cultivate the logical spirit among the people, and by the inexcusable conduct of the latter towards the founder of the famous Land League. Tyranny with the Irish has never been treason against the people unless when seemingly exercised by a power that had to repress in order to protect. Their rights have ever been dwarfed in presence of their hatred,—often hidden altogether from view by a cloud of meaningless grievances. In a word, the people of Ireland have not unfrequently, in their ignorant frenzy, overlooked the necessity for protection either in their own case or that of others.

The tyranny of
the Irish
leaders.

* Dr. Alexander Jackson was a man as fearless in his sentiments as Jonathan Swift himself. On one occasion his house was attacked by a set of scoundrels. Looking out of his library window at their shadowy forms skulking round the corner of the street in which he lived, he shouted after them, "Fire away like the true Irish patriots that you are."—*Taylor's later Reminiscences of Dublin.*

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As has been said, the early months of the year beheld the path of the O'Brien government beset with increasing difficulties. The Hon. Anthony O'Brien, the first President of the Irish Republic, was soon to realize that popularity, gained as his had been, is as easily lost as won. He was a man possessed of many of those qualities of mind and heart which his fellow-countrymen have always been too ready perhaps to admire in their leaders. Even had he been more of the statesman than he was, he would have found it difficult to organize a nation which had yet to learn what true liberty meant. But of true statesmanship he knew as little as did the heterogeneous ministry that thought to advise him. The popularity he had gained during the years of agitation enabled him at first to set his house in order without much dissension appearing among his followers. But he was unable to deal with problems of serious nature. Like those medical men who cure only to have the sores they have healed break out in some other part of the body, he seldom saw beyond the circumstances in which he found himself for the moment placed. Though at one time an agitator possessed of an apparently proud spirit, he had degenerated into a trimmer of the most cautious kind, never being able to rise above the personal desire of retaining his popularity or beyond the narrow-minded sympathies of his counsellors.*

As was to be expected from such a ruler as O'Brien, the progress of the country soon became a question of less importance than the permanence of the ministry. The trimming President, to the neglect of weightier matters, was kept busy in trying to hush the differences of opinion that were ever arising in his cabinet; and, in order to enforce silence at times, he was even known to refer, by way of pathetic appeal, to the ruin which his ministers would bring upon him and them if they quarreled with one another. "Let us make the most of it while it lasts" were not the exact words he was accustomed to use on such occasions, yet they would have conveyed his full meaning had he been bold enough to use them.†

And as long as O'Brien was able to play with the peculiarities of temper and ambition which beset him, without exciting suspicion against his own integrity, his efforts to promote peace were not without success. But such political manoeuvring must sooner or later come to a sad ending. Men like Sir Robert Walpole in England and Sir John A. Macdonald in Canada were able to lengthen their lease of power by setting a price on many of their supporters, but behind the subtle, discerning faculty these rulers possessed of playing with the weaknesses of men, there was to be found the true ambition of developing the strength of the

O'Brien's gov-
 ernment and
 his own
 character.

His designs to
 retain power.

His inefficient
 plans.

* O'Brien, it is said, was originally a shoemaker, who had worked his way up in life with remarkable courage and consummate tact.

† "President O'Brien, when anything occurs to distress him, is accustomed to advise the individual causing the trouble, to consider carefully what would happen to Ireland were he to resign."—*The Dublin Comet*.

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country. O'Brien knew only too well the price of each man's vote in his council, being gifted with a shrewdness, in dealing with his fellow-men, which seemed to be his by instinct; but his plans for the permanence of the republican form of government in Ireland were all of the most puerile character, having no consistency in them beyond the expediency of the moment.

The effect of
abolishing rent.

The enactments which had been passed ostensibly in favour of a settlement of the Land Question, had in reality been drawn up in favour of the class that commanded the largest number of votes, as any one can easily see for himself by reading them. While striking the death-blow at landlordism in Ireland, these laws possessed in themselves the inevitable tendency of exciting ill-feeling between the farmers in comfortable circumstances and those whose indolence ever keeps them in a state of poverty. The pittance of rent which the very poor had formerly paid the landlord was a very important sum in the eyes of these misguided people as long as the landlord was recognized by law; but it did not seem to improve their condition much when added to their income. When the landlords were driven from Ireland, and when the spoil had been dissipated in a manner which can hardly be stated without provoking disgust, there arose a feeling that no man had a right to more property than another; and indeed it was the growing courage of such an opinion that foreshadowed the first great difficulty with which the O'Brien government had to contend. The Land League was a thing of the past, but its pernicious teachings remained. The poor, deluded Irish farmer had been trained to treat landlords and their bailiffs as legitimate victims; and now that there were no landlords, but only property holders it was very easy for the poor farmer to make himself believe that there was not much difference between the two classes, and that he was justified in treating his rich fellow-countrymen as he had formerly treated the lord of English descent in the days of landlordism.

The Ennis-
fairen outrage.

In the beginning of February a message was sent to Dublin from a pastoral district in Galway, urging the government to send immediate assistance to quell a disturbance which had broken out among the cottars of Ennisfairen. The Minister of Militia, who was a man difficult at all times to move, put the telegram in his pocket and sent back word for a fuller account of the trouble by mail. In three days the civilized world rang with the news that a band of men had overrun the whole district around Ennisfairen, putting to death every well-to-do farmer and carrying off all the movable property they could lay their hands on. As appeared from the report of the affair, no one had interfered with the progress of the murderers, and it was further added that the villains were holding high carnival over the event in one of the valleys where more than fifty of the cottars were accustomed to live.

Such an event caused the greatest excitement everywhere, but nowhere was the indignation louder than in the cities and populous centres of Ire-

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land. As was explained in the third chapter of this volume, the cities of Cork, Limerick and Waterford had become, under the Act of Independence, all but free cities, the step having been taken partly to justify the theory of Home Rule perhaps, but chiefly to curtail the influence of their great rival, Dublin. The authorities of Limerick, on hearing of the terrible outrage in Galway, sent a detachment of volunteers to pursue the miscreants and bring them to justice, and so well did the Limerick yeomen perform their task that over thirty of the marauders had been taken prisoners before the arrival of troops from Dublin. In their zeal, however, the citizens of Limerick, overlooking all military etiquette, had unwittingly aroused the official wrath of the Hon. Charles O'Donovan, the Minister of Militia, and a peremptory order was issued from head-quarters to the effect that all the prisoners in the hands of the Limerick volunteers were to be handed over to the captain of the Dublin detachment, and that the volunteers themselves were to be disbanded on the spot. From a military point of view, the Minister of Militia was probably correct, and, no doubt, had his orders been couched in milder phrase, the volunteers would have left for home without a murmur. As it happened, however, they treated O'Donovan's orders with silent contempt; with their prisoners safely secured, they retreated in a body, and on arriving in their own city, marched through the streets amid the plaudits of the populace.*

The other large towns were not slow in showing how their sympathies ran in favor of the action taken by Limerick. Three days after the arrival of the volunteers, the prisoners were tried and condemned to be hanged, and still no formal report of such summary procedure was sent to Dublin. On the fifth day, the authorities of Dublin, who had demanded an explanation from the Governor of Limerick, sent orders that the prisoners should be conveyed to the capital at once, with the threat that if the governor failed to comply with the request, he would immediately be put under arrest. The excitement in Limerick now became intense, and as the congratulations still continued to flow in from the other cities, the feeling grew bolder and bolder every hour in favour of further resisting the tyranny of the Militia Office. But the Governor of Limerick was a man of exceptional sagacity, and through his tact alone extreme measures were avoided. Under the stipulation, privately accepted by the President, that the sentence of death would be carried into execution, he eventually sent the prisoners to Dublin, and a few days after the law had been enforced according to agreement, the excitement in Limerick died away, though not before the series of incidents had deepened the feeling of jealousy between Dublin and the other cities.†

* *Vide*, The life of Charles O'Donovan by his grandson Charles Macpherson O'Donovan, General Fitzgibbon in his memoirs, page 33, says that the Limerick authorities did not exceed their powers in acting as they did.

† The Governor of Limerick at the time of the Ennisfairen outrage was George Henry Cook, a man whose name will ever be revered in his native Connaught.

The activity of
Limerick.

The sagacity of
the Governor
of Limerick.

Excitement in
the country
districts.

No one had really dared to show any sympathy towards the villains who had paid the extreme penalty of the law. Their crime was of the most atrocious character. Yet murmurs were not unfrequently heard in the country districts during the time of excitement, against the unseemly haste with which the law had been carried out. In the capital itself the citizens were divided in their opinions,—the respectable classes being nearly all in favour of the final action of the government, the lower classes being inclined to repeat the murmurs which came from the country. Even the ministry, kept so well in hand by O'Brien, were far from being of one opinion, and before many weeks had passed away, there were rumors afloat to the effect that the Hon. Charles O'Donovan's conduct had interrupted the popularity which had remained unimpaired since the inception of the Republic; and as other occasions arose, the Minister of Militia began to find it difficult to get the government to carry out his plans. The friction at last became intolerable even to a man of O'Donovan's spirit, and no one was surprised when it came to be told in the newspapers that he had actually resigned.

O'Donovan
resigns.

O'Donovan's
defense.

The National Senate was called together about the middle of February. In the President's Message, a very cautiously worded reference was made about the Ennisfairen trouble. The people of Limerick were praised for the assistance which they had rendered the Republic in bringing the offenders to justice, while an appeal was made to all to uphold the principles on which the independence of Ireland could alone be firmly secured. On the eighth day of the session, when an opportunity occurred during the discussion of a motion for supplies, O'Donovan, the ex-Minister of Militia stood up in his place to justify his conduct in connection with the Ennisfairen outrage. He made some general remarks about his withdrawal from the government, but said nothing that could be construed into a censure of his colleagues. It was not until he came to speak of the effects which the temerity of Limerick had produced that his language became violent. As he proceeded, he broke forth into invective against the community that would override, as Limerick had over-ridden, the constitution of the country, and at last turned his indignation, in a torrent of abuse, against the encroachments of the would-be rivals of Dublin, as he was pleased to call Limerick, Cork, and Waterford. There was now no disguise thrown over his intentions. The tenor of his speech pointed him out as the self-elected champion of the lower orders, whose rights he said were being trampled under foot by the property-holders of the country. He had fought for the independence of Ireland, at a time when the tyranny of England had set its mark on every hillside in the country, and he was not the less inclined to uphold the rights of the democracy on which, as a foundation, an Irish Republic could only stand.

O'Donovan's speech was received with silence. Not a word was raised either in opposition to his words or in their favour. The government hardly knew how to act, and it was a relief to all parties when one of the

* Vid.
in Ireland

members for Kerry rose to make a speech on the condition of some of the roads in his county.

Next day full reports of O'Donovan's speech appeared in all the daily papers of the cities which he had not been afraid to denounce, and the excitement deepened into growls of indignation when his words had been considered in their full import. The city of Limerick naturally was the first to take action, and at an immense gathering in the open air, attended by thousands of people, resolutions were passed demanding the expulsion of the ex-Minister from the Senate. These resolutions were immediately forwarded to their representatives in the Senate, by whom they were laid upon the table; and in less than a week they were followed by similar documents from Waterford and Cork, as well as from many of the other towns.

Limerick's indignation.

The government showed no inclination to take any direct action in the affair as it now stood. The resolutions and the petitions were in the hands of the Senate, and the members of the government would vote, when a vote was called for, but only as members of the Senate. It was quite competent for any private member to take the matter in hand. This caused some delay, although it was known that the vote would be against O'Donovan, if it should be taken before prorogation. The government was popular with the Senate, and had no difficulty in passing the measures which it introduced; yet the majority were determined that the O'Donovan affair should not be overlooked, and when the member for Roscommon made a motion, by way of experiment, that O'Donovan should be called upon to retire from the Senate, he found no difficulty in securing an overwhelming majority in its favour.

Action taken in the Senate against O'Donovan.

The war between rich and poor, between city and country, had now been inaugurated, for before a week was over O'Donovan was the recognized champion of the rights of the people among the poorer classes. He was the Parnell of a new era in Ireland's politics. From district to district he made a kind of triumphal procession, as the friend of the poor man; and during the summer months there was organized in nearly every country district a Society of Socialists to check the tyranny of the well-to-do. The phenomenon was history repeating itself for the hundredth time; and if it be possible for politicians to look down from a higher sphere, or up from a lower one, those who had opposed Parnell and the whole phalanx of Irish patriots in the days when Home Rule was only a theory, must have rubbed their hands with glee in seeing their prophecies approaching fulfilment. The old Irish grievances began to re-appear. The government was in favour of the wealth of the cities, and the wealth of city and country would keep the poor man wallowing in the dust of his poverty for ever. There was nothing for it but to sweep from the face of the earth those who would thus usurp the poor man's rights.

A new era in Irish politics.

* *Vide*, note at the end of this volume on Societies of Socialists and their organization in Ireland.

Lawlessness
spreads.

Such was the doctrine which O'Donovan and his followers sowed broadcast, and outrage followed upon outrage, until the government found themselves utterly impotent to stem the current of lawlessness. In all the towns, except the three which held their government in their own hands, there were to be found two parties,—and when the lower orders happened to be fortified by an influx of people from the country on market days, there was sure to follow some disturbance that had to be put down by the military. And thus for months affairs went from bad to worse, until the first great collision between the two parties took place in Tipperary.

Tipperary and
O'Donovan.

In the troubles connected with the Ennisfairen outrage, the town of Tipperary had sympathized to some extent with the action taken by Limerick. Being the constituency, however, which had been represented by O'Donovan in the Senate, there was at first, naturally enough, a strong element of the population, especially of the lower orders, in favour of neutrality. After that gentleman had been expelled from the Senate, he at once intimated his intention of throwing himself upon his constituency for protection, and in this way, even before the writ for a new election had been issued, Tipperary had drawn towards it the attention of all Ireland. It was not the first time this old town had taken a prominent position in the political history of the island. It had played a noisy part in the great struggle for Home Rule; and in view of the previous training to which its electors had been subjected, and which had developed within their breasts unyielding democratic tendencies, many people readily arrived at the conclusion that Tipperary would be found in opposition to the government before the election was over.

Societies of
Socialists.

When the government saw the serious condition of the country, it determined to delay the issue of the election writ, until the excitement, which the so-called Societies of Socialists had created in the country districts, had been somewhat allayed. But the more the government tried to pacify the lower orders, the stronger grew the indignation against its members, the bolder became the outrages against life and property. At length it was decided that a special meeting of the Senate should be called to consider the perilous state of the country, and, if necessary, to adopt some stringent measures for the repression of crime.

The Senate
non-committal
at first.

The temper of the Senate was at first gloomy and non-committal. Though every member must have been fully aware that the pernicious influence of the Societies of Socialists lay at the bottom of most of the excitement, few were brave enough to initiate a movement leading to their suppression. But the discussion which followed was inevitable, when once the representative from Kerry found courage to break the ice in a vigorous and patriotic speech. Not a voice was raised in opposition to his suggestion, that the government should introduce a Bill to stamp out the evil at its source. Nor was any other business transacted until the govern-

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ment had adopted his advice, by providing for the dispersion of all meet-
ings of secret societies, and the re-organization of the militia forces.

The Senate remained in session during the autumn months, adjourning
at times for a few days to give the members an opportunity of looking
after their private affairs. Still, the nation continued in a state of unrest.
The disaffected country districts were necessarily under military protec-
tion; and every one knows what bitter experiences such a system of pro-
tection provokes among the poor. Even those who see the necessity for
such protection are apt to grumble at its repellant form, while those who
by their irregularities have brought things to such a pass, continue to hatch
treason in secret against the power that seeks to restrain them.

The country
districts under
military
protection.

The large cities stood loyally by the Republic. Nor did the government
seem to lose ground, notwithstanding the daily scrutiny of the Senate.
The wealthy merchants and the more respectable property-holders were
all in favour of O'Brien and his policy. The outrages in the country dis-
tricts did not all disappear it is true, but they became less frequent; and
it is possible that the government would have tided over all difficulties
for a year or two, had the Tipperary election not intervened. To delay
that election longer was impossible.

The wealthy
classes in
favour of
O'Brien.

The delay, short as it had been, had estranged many of the electors of
a town, which had more than once attained to a notoriety for riotous
behaviour, even under the Republic. The discontents railed against the
government on the plea that by the expulsion of O'Donovan, Tipperary
had been deprived of electoral rights at a crisis in the affairs of the coun-
try when every voice ought to have been heard. They did not say that
O'Donovan had acted in a proper spirit, nor did they justify his punish-
ment. But they were none the less loud in their remonstrances, which
at last became so pressing that the government had to give way.

Discontent-
ment in
Tipperary.

No sooner was the writ for the election issued than there was inau-
gurated a period of excitement which, in its violence and waywardness,
rivalled the noisiest times of the Home Rule Campaign. Except in the
taverns and boarding houses, business was for the moment suspended.
Many of the places of business were barricaded and all the workshops
were at a stand-still. A day or two before nomination-day the streets
were crowded with a population four times greater than what the town
usually contained. Fighting was the favourite form of amusement, and
hardly an hour passed without a disturbance of one kind or another.
A large body of special constables had been sworn in, a few days previ-
ously, and these, coming to the assistance of the regular police, succeeded
for a time in preventing faction fights or the appearance of rioting.
Indeed it was not until the constituents began to collect in large assem-
blies, in the open spaces in and around the town, to listen to the haran-
gues of the respective candidates and their supporters, that the insu fi-
ciency of the force for protection became fully evident.

A period of
excitement
inaugurated in
the town.

At length, in the outskirts of the town, on the day before nomination

Nomination-day in Tipperary.

day, there occurred a terrible hand to hand contest between the partisans of the opposing factions. During the conflict, which lasted more than an hour, three men were killed and nearly fifty disabled. Next morning a force of five hundred militia took up their quarters in the town buildings, under orders from head-quarters to put down any violence which might further occur during the election. But four thousand men would have found such a task a difficult one. When the hour approached for the nomination of the candidates the tokens of approaching disaster became more and more apparent. The town was in the hands of a class of men who care little for authority in any form, when once the spirit of evil takes full possession of their passions. The soldiers attempted to surround the hustings, only to be driven from their position by the impetus of overwhelming numbers. Then the sheriff took counsel with the candidates themselves, and advised them to waive their privilege of addressing the populace. This peaceful course was adopted, but without a peaceful effect, for as soon as the intimation was made that the candidates would retire until the evening, when they would address their respective supporters at different places, the disappointed audience threw aside all restraint, and taking possession of the platform which had been erected in front of the Court House, broke it up into fragments and scattered the materials in every direction. The work of destruction was now inaugurated, and continued until sundown, when a retreat was sounded by the announcement that the candidates were marshalling their supporters in separate buildings at different parts of the town.

The government candidate

An hour afterwards, Colonel Roberts, the government candidate, surrounded by a bodyguard of his agents, succeeded in gaining entrance to a hall in the eastern part of the town, where an overflowing assembly had met to listen to his address. The number of people outside was almost as great as that inside, and the din that prevailed was so full of angry outbursts that the colonel was almost induced by some of his less excited clients to withdraw. Yet he felt that to dismiss such a crowd would be as dangerous as to face it; for, in dismissing them, he would not only have to encounter a charge of cowardice as far as he himself was concerned, but would set his faction at liberty to seek more dangerous employment among O'Donovan's supporters in another part of the town. It was therefore with the best of intentions that Roberts kept to his purpose of addressing his own friends.

O'Donovan's meeting.

O'Donovan's meeting had assembled earlier than Colonel Roberts's. The ex-Minister, in the early part of his short address, stated that it was no intention of his to detain his audience, as he was anxious that they should have an opportunity of listening to his opponent in the National Hall. In the remark itself there was probably no intentional harm, but there can be no doubt that the action of O'Donovan in dismissing the members of his faction at an early hour of the evening was the occasion of the catastrophe which filled men's minds with grief and alarm when

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han Colonel Roberts's dress, stated that it was was anxious that they ponent in the National intentional harm, but van in dismissing the oning was the occasion grief and alarm when

tidings of it was carried to the ends of the earth. An attempt has been made by some historians to exonerate O'Donovan in this matter; and yet for his conduct there can be offered no valid excuse. If he did not know, he ought to have known that a spark is as dangerous when thrown among touchwood as is a lighted torch. He had the experience of the morning to warn him against fomenting strife directly or indirectly.

The assembly within the National Hall consisted for the most part of government supporters, as were also at first those outside. But the crowd outside dispersed when they found that there was no chance of gaining admission to a place already overcrowded, and for an hour or so Colonel Roberts continued his address with but little interruption. This, however, did not last long. About half-past eight the hall was surrounded by the howling crowd of O'Donovan's partisans, who loudly demanded admission. Of course this had to be denied them, and at once began a scene which, as an onlooker says, baffled all description. A concerted attack was made on every side of the building, and in a moment nearly every pane of glass was shattered by a shower of missiles. The attack was so sudden that no one inside, for the moment, knew what had happened. For an instant the awful silence which precedes confusion prevailed. The minds of all were stunned for a moment with the fear of what might happen. Then arose the most piteous cries, as an instantaneous rush was made towards the places of exit. Men thought of nothing but their own individual safety, and to procure that safety they paused not to rush into the very jaws of death.

The National Hall attacked.

At length the militia, coming up suddenly, fell upon the rioters and endeavoured to deliver the building out of their hands. After killing a number of them they cleared the spaces around the doors, in order that there might be no interruption to the flow of human beings from the hall. It was all but certain that hundreds within the building were dead or dying. The most heart-rending cries were being emitted from the ruined windows, as the soldiers laboured with a will to keep the streams of human life unimpeded by the attacks of the rioters, who every now and then rallied their numbers to make a rush upon the building. But alas for all the energy the militia eagerly spent! They were fighting against a force which, in an instant, was to crush their puny efforts at a blow. They seemed to be on the point of saving the vast multitude from the suffocating pressure near the various outlets from the hall, when unexpectedly, and with a violence irresistible, an explosion rent the air for miles around, tearing up the very foundations of the building, levelling its walls with the ground, and making of its stone and lime the funeral mound of over nine hundred human beings. "My God," exclaimed the colonel in command, as he fell back from the tottering wall, "the fiends have done for us at last." Alas! it was too true; dynamite was laughing with hellish glee at its greatest achievement of political treachery. The fiendish instrument of hatred and ignorance which, many

A scene of terrible confusion.

years before, had struck terror into the hearts of the people of Great Britain, was being employed across the channel. The town of Tipperary was in the hands of the communists, and before daybreak every man of wealth had fled before the incipient rage of the anarchy they succeeded in introducing.

O'Donovan's
resolution.

The sun rose upon a scene of social chaos. The streets of the town were crowded with men, women, and children, running hither and thither in alarm. For O'Donovan himself there seemed to be left no choice. Whether he was the cause of the catastrophe or not, he felt that the blame would lie at his door. His resolution, by its suddenness, assumed a look of premeditation. He knew, or thought he knew, his strength in the country—a strength which had for months identified him as the emancipator of his fellow-men from the oppression of wealth, and from being the champion of a cause, his soul all at once became inflated with the ambition to be the leader of a nation. With the rabble he was popular, and amid the shouts of the rabble he proposed to seize the *imperium* of Ireland. His opportunity had come; and so actively did he set to work to secure his first foothold as an independent ruler in Tipperary, that before noon he had a provisional government organized in the town and fully a thousand men under arms for its protection. Rebellion had again raised its bull-dog head within the unfortunate realm. Civil war was inevitable.

The excitement
in Dublin.

When the tidings of these events were carried to Dublin the greatest commotion arose among the people. The iconoclasts in their terrible revels had cut down the telegraph wires to prevent immediate communication, and it was not until late in the day succeeding the outbreak that the government received full particulars of the extent and true character of the calamity. The force at the command of the government was at once found to be very inadequate to meet all the emergencies of the case. O'Brien felt that to allow Tipperary to remain for any length of time in the hands of the anarchists would be attended by the most serious results to the Republic; and yet, in view of the inadequacy of his resources to contend with any uprising in the capital, which, from the excitement that prevailed, seemed all but certain, he could hardly spare a force that would be large enough to crush the rebel O'Donovan at a blow. Before night-fall, however, an army of a thousand volunteers was despatched by rail, and the city of Dublin, as far as possible, was placed in a state of seige, with special constables guarding every street. Messages were sent to all the large cities and towns for re-inforcements, and soon all Ireland was in a flame of excitement.

Limerick's
precautions.

Limerick took immediate steps to frustrate any movement on the part of the anarchists within its bounds. An attempt was made, on the day the news of the Tipperary affair arrived, to assassinate the governor of the city, as he passed through one of the public parks. But the House of Citizens, as the representative body of the city met in council was called, at once passed a law for the suppression of all secret societies, and further

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provided for the immediate execution of all persons suspected of conspir-
ing against individuals or against the state. In a week's time, ten men
had suffered the extreme penalty of the law, and twenty others were
arrested. Boycotting became a crime, and in a very short time there was
not to be found a secret society in any part of the city or of the surround-
ing district.

The other cities did not fare so well. The rebellious spirit raged in every
one of them. In Cork there was continuous commotion for a fortnight. One
night a whole street was wrecked, and the property of the wealthier citizens
wantonly destroyed. The House of Citizens was attacked more than once
by explosives. In Waterford the rioting was of the most violent character.
In Wexford the incendiary's treacherous hand destroyed two of the finest
edifices in the place. The west of Leinster and the east of Munster were
ravaged by a set of scoundrels, who went by the name of "barbicans."
Indeed, within a week after the Tipperary trouble, there was hardly a
town in the south which could not show wounds received at the hands
of the anarchists. Yet there is a majesty in the law which of itself wards
off evil. Nearly everywhere there arose a strong desire for peace after the
first outbursts had spent themselves. The majority of the people were loyal
to the Republic, and but for the discontent which continued to disturb the
country districts, Ireland as an independency might have been longer
lived.

While the government force lay outside of Tipperary, watching O'Dono-
van's movements, O'Brien was engaged in collecting an army of five thou-
sand men in Dublin. At first, it was thought that a thousand men would
be sufficient to crush O'Donovan; but when the commander, General
Fitzgibbon, heard that the former had organized a band of five thousand
men drawn from the disaffected country districts, he deemed it prudent to
wait for reinforcements. The large cities, as has been said, stood loyally
by the government. Each of them sent supplies and as many men as they
could enlist. Limerick alone sent a thousand troops, including five hun-
dred volunteers. Before the week was over, O'Brien was in a position to
start for Tipperary at the head of nearly six thousand men.

On joining Fitzgibbon, the President of the Republic advanced his
troops to within half-a-mile of the town, proposing to make the attack
early in the morning. But, as events turned out, no attack was neces-
sary. When O'Donovan saw the forces of the Republic collected in such
numbers, he felt convinced that resistance would be useless. He there-
fore withdrew from the town under cover of night, followed by five thousand
men, and when O'Brien at sun-rise brought up his advance-guard into the
town, he found the place in the hands of the rabble. Before the afternoon,
every appearance of disturbance had been stamped out.

O'Donovan betook himself to the country, thinking probably that there
he could the better escape from being hemmed in by the forces of the
government. His men, however, were not of those who could face the
killed.

The country
in a state of
commotion.

O'Brien
collects a force
of five
thousand.

O'Donovan
retreats from
Tipperary.

Three hundred
of O'Donovan's
followers
killed.

enemy in the field, and when O'Brien sent three thousand of his men in pursuit, the rebel army seemed to melt away. There was no battle. More than three hundred of O'Donovan's followers were killed, and twice as many more taken prisoners. O'Donovan himself escaped.

O'Brien's
short-lived
triumphal
march.

O'Brien returned to Tipperary after the apparent rout of the enemy. There had been no contest, but that did not prevent the President from taking credit for a victory. With all the pride of a conqueror, he sent a message to the Senate informing the members that Tipperary was in his hands. He entered Tipperary, on his return from following O'Donovan, amid all the military pomp of a triumphal march. He even decided to remain in the town for a day, in order to supervise, as he said, the work of re-organization, but more probably to give his friends in Dublin time to arrange a grand reception for him on his return to the capital. Did not the ruins of the National Hall, in which had perished so many of the citizens of Tipperary, utter a warning in his ears? Was there nothing in the sudden retreat of O'Donovan to excite in his mind a premonitory suspicion of treachery?

Dynamite
morality.

Subtle are the cruelties of cowardice. But of all the processes invented by the coward to wreak out his vengeance on those who happen to come under his displeasure, none has ever appeared to the human mind to be more diabolical than the methods adopted by the dynamite assassin. The twentieth century, in contemplating the characteristics of the so-called nineteenth century civilization, fails to understand why the barbarity of the dynamite fiend was not hounded down sooner than it was. In the early days of the invention of nitro-glycerine, at the time when by means of its terrible effects, England began to realize the full intensity of the hatred of the Irish populace against British institutions, when English property was being destroyed and Englishmen's lives threatened by this the deadly instrument of fiendish passion, it is said that the feeling of satisfaction at the devastation it produced was confined by no means to the lower orders in Ireland. Men, who claimed to possess more than ordinary intelligence and influence, are said to have sympathized indirectly with the machinations of the dynamitard. To Irishmen, at all events, is due the introduction of the explosive as a means of accomplishing vengeance on a political foe; and even the more prominent of the leaders of the Home Rule movement are said to have had nothing very serious to say against the nefarious practice, so long as the underground devices of the dynamite fiend were directed against the property of the hated Saxon.*

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But Ireland itself was to suffer by the vile practices of the dynamite anarchist and that in a manner almost too horrifying to contemplate. On the night after O'Donovan's rout, O'Brien placed the town of Tipperary

* Vide, "The History of Dynamite by one who knows how to use it for political purposes." Published by Shortman & Co., London, England, 1896.

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in the hands of the soldiery, while he himself remained outside in the camp, completing his preparations for returning to Dublin next day. At midnight the town was as quiet as if nothing had happened. The night was dark,—just such a night as the assassin usually selects for his foulest crime. The soldiers were wearied out with their exertions, and it seemed as if a deep sleep had fallen upon everything, save the sentinels as they passed up and down with a lantern in one hand and a rifle in the other. But all were not asleep. A few stealthy steps might have been heard in alley-ways and lanes, if there had been any one on the alert for them. The devil was abroad. He was laying a train to send thousand of poor souls into eternity at a moment's notice. The town was sleeping on a mine of dynamite, connected by a thread work of electric wires, and a second Guy Fawkes was awake to start the current.

An hour after midnight the terrible crime was consummated, and a minute after the awful explosion had taken place, Tipperary was in ruins. By the noise of the explosion, O'Brien was aroused from his bed in camp, which fell into the greatest confusion before any one knew of a certainty what had happened. A council of war was called immediately, but even the officers who attended were terror stricken, and unable to decide with any confidence what ought to be done. The encampment was in the open country, where men were safe from the mines of the rebels, or there would have been a panic. As it was, there was difficulty in preventing desertions. For hours no one dared approach the ruins of the town, for it was impossible to know whether the satanic force had spent itself. Hundreds of poor wretches had been able to drag themselves from the debris and the burning houses, and from these the soldiers learned something of the dire calamity. Dynamite had attained a still greater achievement. The town was a heap of ruins, while the dead and dying were to be counted by the thousands.

O'Brien took immediate precautions. With a coolness which won the admiration of the army, he spent the morning in passing around the camp, re-assuring by his presence and words the various companies. He even led in person an ambulance corps to the town, and adopted measures for the safety of all who could be rescued from the ruins of the place. At last, leaving General Fitzgibbon in charge of the army, he started for Dublin.

Before he arrived in the capital the intelligence of the calamity had spread everywhere, notwithstanding the fact that he had given orders at the telegraph offices to keep back all despatches. Dublin was again all excitement. The streets were crowded with people as the President's carriage passed from the railway station to his official residence. But there was no cheering. A chill seemed to have struck the heart of the Republic.

The Senate was immediately summoned to meet on the evening of the President's arrival, but not before he had learned from his more intimate

A Tipperary in ruins.

O'Brien's coolness.

A chill at the heart of the Republic.

The Senate summoned by O'Brien.

friends that even Dubliners were beginning to fear the force which had levelled Tipperary to the ground. The socialists were at work, he was told; and the sooner precautions were taken against a possible outbreak the safer it would be for the Republic. The chief of the city police was summoned at once to the President's cabinet, but he did not seem to think that there was immediate danger to the city of Dublin. All the precautions he had taken, he said, had not been sufficient to stamp out the secret societies in the capital, but he felt convinced that their inclination to do harm was under such close surveillance that no immediate danger need be apprehended.

The Senate in session.

In the evening, the Senate assembled. On every senator's countenance there was writ the terrible suspicion that the Tipperary calamity was not the end of all danger to the Republic. The Senate House was crowded in every part, and expectancy hung round the President's chair as he took his place to preside over the assembly. Though there was anxiety in every face, however, there was no haste in the proceedings; for more than an hour was spent in that preliminary work which makes the legislative routine of such assemblies so irksome to those in the galleries. At length O'Brien arose and read his message. In his voice at first there was the tremor of excitement, but as he proceeded to speak of the dangers which beset the country, his spirit rose to the occasion, and the men who listened to his words felt that the President of the Irish Republic at least was a man in whom they could trust. He kept back nothing.

O'Brien's advice.

"Men of Ireland and Senators of the Irish Republic," he exclaimed, with the deep tones of a true orator, "our country is on its trial. We are surrounded by enemies; and lurking in every corner of our land there is a power which seeks to undermine all law and order by no ordinary methods of warfare. When I set out from the capital to crush the traitor who has raised the standard of rebellion in the south, I felt assured that the dignity of the Irish *imperium* would be sustained through the force of arms, and notwithstanding all that has happened I am still convinced that the Irish people remain loyal to the Republic. And here I call upon all true-hearted Irishmen to stand by their country, and assist my government in putting an end to the disgraceful scenes which have lately disturbed her coasts. Though there is cause to fear, yet fear none of us must know. This country is ours. If it cannot be our home, let it be our grave, and let all traitors learn a lesson from the patriotism which can laugh at treachery, as we set our face against the terrible calamity which has befallen our fellowmen."

O'Donovan's movements.

The discussion which followed continued until early morning, when it was resolved that the Senate should remain in session from day to day to support the government in its efforts to uphold the authority of the law. Next day the tidings arrived that O'Donovan was making a march through the country districts, and was adding to the number of his followers as he proceeded towards Dublin. The number of his adherents was variously

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stated as being from three to ten thousand men. He had been routed; but the spirit of rebellion, bred for centuries among the lower orders, had suffered no check. Anarchy prevailed everywhere except in the large cities, and to them alone the wealthier classes looked for protection.

Fitzgibbon again received orders to march against the demagogue. Pre-^{Fitzgibbon receives his orders.}parations were inaugurated in Dublin to raise an overwhelming force. But Dublin itself, notwithstanding all vigilance, on the part of the authorities, became more and more affected with the suspicion that the rebels were secretly at work in the capital; many fully believed that the doom of the city had been decreed. This feeling of impending calamity did not prevent the Senate from performing its daily duties, nor was there any division in its counsels. In their conduct there was true patriotism, but, alas! it was a patriotism that was powerless to stem the tide of lawlessness that was sweeping over the country.

At last the terrible blow fell. The Senate had been in session from ^{The two armies meet.} early dawn, waiting patiently to hear tidings from the seat of war. Fitzgibbon's army had come up with O'Donovan's the day before, and were at length face to face with the enemy in a plain about three miles distant from Maryborough. O'Brien was with the army. From hour to hour he continued to send despatches, and though these gave no cause of doubt that the enemy would be overwhelmed, there was anxiety on every senator's countenance. Business was at a standstill in the city. Thousands of the citizens kept crowding round the Senate House as anxious to hear the news as were the senators within, but much more noisy in their excitement. Even should the news be of victory, would safety be secured for Ireland?

The battle began. The despatches suddenly ceased to come. Hours ^{The despatch of Victory.} passed and yet no tidings arrived. Then darkness fell upon the city. Six o'clock came, but the House took no recess. The suspense became something terrible to the three hundred men sitting silently and expectant. Even the hum of the crowd outside was heard distinctly, so solemn was the stillness within. At last, at nine o'clock, a messenger approached the Speaker's chair. In his hand he bore a despatch. "Read it, read it," shouted every voice in the chamber, as the receiver of the message proceeded to open it with what seemed inexcusable deliberation. "Victory!" at length shouted the Speaker, giving way to the clamour and raising his voice above it. "Victory!" said he, "the enemies of Ireland have been defeated."

The shout with which the tidings were received was simultaneous. The cry of victory was taken up outside by the populace and passed along ^{The cry of victory.} the leading thoroughfares. "God has saved Ireland!" was the cry everywhere throughout the city, even while yet the shouts of joy rang through the Senate House.

Alas! that such tidings should not have proved true. The joy of patri-^{False tidings.}otism was but short lived. The tidings were premature. The army of

the Republic had been scattered like the leaves of autumn before a cyclone. The force which had laid Tipperary in ruins had destroyed O'Brien and his forces at a blow. In a word, the tactics of the Bruce at Bannockburn had been repeated by O'Donovan; and the deadly dynamite pits which he had dug in the field, and which are fully described in the addenda of this volume, placed victory in his hands.

Destruction to
O'Brien's
Army.

The despatch which had been sent to the Senate was genuine though premature. It had been sent by O'Brien himself, who, when he saw the followers of O'Donovan in full retreat before his own army, felt confident of victory. The retreat, however, was a mere *ruse* to induce the government forces to pass over the ground which O'Donovan had occupied for two days before the arrival of O'Brien. The catastrophe which followed, it is needless to say, was instantaneous. The leader of the anarchists had invented a new kind of warfare on the field of battle, and Ireland for the moment lay prostrate at his feet.

Ireland at the
feet of an
adventurer.

Yes, prostrate Ireland lay at the feet of an adventurer, with anarchy rampant in every corner of the country. And even the worse was not yet. Not until Dublin lay in ruins, with its finest public buildings reduced to mounds of stone and lime, and its Senate House in ashes, had the Irish people drunk to the dregs the bitter cup of retribution. The siege of Dublin, to which we have devoted the succeeding chapter, forms one of the most deplorable events in the annals of history, ending as it did with the cry which went across the channel from a bruised and bleeding patriotism, praying for succour from a power which in former times it had blindly treated as an enemy.

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